

FOCUS ON RESEARCH:

Obesity puts patients at higher risk for cancer.

For decades physicians have encouraged patients to eat well and maintain a healthy weight to improve heart health. In more recent years, we have stressed losing excess weight to reduce the risk of diabetes. Now we can add cancer to the growing list of diseases exacerbated by obesity.

1/3 of all US cancer deaths are attributable to diet and physical inactivity habits.¹

THE PROBLEM

A long-term American Cancer Society study shows that obesity can actually increase our risk of getting cancer and may even worsen our chances of surviving after a cancer diagnosis.²

According to the study, the higher the weight the higher the cancer occurrence. Certain cancer types also showed a stronger link including: breast cancer after menopause, cancers of the colon and rectum, pancreas, kidney, esophagus, and endometrium. Overweight cancer patients have poorer survival rates – particularly obese women with breast cancer and obese men with prostate cancer. These overweight patients are also more likely to have an aggressive form of cancer that is more likely to come back after surgery.

1/3 of US adults are obese. How many of your patients are at elevated risk?

WHAT YOU CAN DO

When it comes to addressing weight, doctors often just don't know how to broach the subject. Weight is an emotionally charged topic. However, patients are best served when doctors recognize obesity as a medical condition and discuss it openly and honestly with their patients.

One study showed that physicians who used an empathetic and motivational communication style (versus a confrontational or judgmental style) led to more weight lost in post-appointment follow-ups (3.1 lbs lost versus .4 lbs gained). The longer the physician-patient discussion, the more specific the recommendations and the more regular the follow-ups, the better the weight loss results.³

Citations

¹ American Cancer Society. *Cancer Prevention & Early Detection Facts & Figures 2012*. Atlanta, GA: American Cancer Society; 2012.

² Cancer.org. *Cancer Prevention Studies Overviews*, <http://www.cancer.org/research/researchprograms-funding/epidemiology-cancerpreventionstudies/cancerpreventionstudyoverviews/index>

³ American Journal of Preventive Medicine, *Physician Communication Techniques and Weight Loss in Adults*, Volume 39, Issue 4, Pages 321-328, October 2010.



Dr. Perez reviews a treatment plan with a patient

Sierra Nevada Cancer Center opens office in Sparks

Dr. Jorge Perez and his team are now seeing Reno/Sparks oncology and hematology patients at their recently opened office located at 2345 E. Prater Way, Suite 102. The clinic offers private treatment rooms and an in-house pharmacy for customized chemotherapy.

Sierra Nevada Cancer Center currently has four northern Nevada locations with another office planned to open this year in South Lake Tahoe.

Sparks

Vista Medical Terrace
2345 E. Prater Way, Suite 102
Sparks, Nevada 89434

Carson City

1460 S Curry Street, Suite 100
Carson City, Nevada 89703

Fallon

1020 New River Parkway
Fallon, Nevada 89406

Gardnerville

1107 Hwy 395
Gardnerville, Nevada 89410



AMA Suggestions for Broaching Weight with Patients



- I am concerned about your weight and would like to talk with you about it. Is that ok?
- Monitoring your weight is as important as measuring your blood pressure and heart rate. I've noticed that your weight is up from last year. Has anything been going on that may have contributed to the weight gain?
- What do you know about the risks of being overweight?
- Your excess weight is contributing to your [elevated blood pressure, diabetes, high fats in the blood, GERD, obstructive sleep apnea]. As little as a 5 percent weight loss has been shown to improve these conditions. Are you interested in taking better control of your weight? Is this a good time?
- Based on your height, your weight today places you in a category we medically call obesity. It puts you at a higher risk of developing [diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, some forms of cancer].
- I've looked over your chart and am concerned about your increasing weight. According to my records, you have gained [5] pounds over the past [3] years. Although you are still in the healthy body weight range, you're on a path to become overweight in the near future. Do you have a sense of what is causing this?
- What aspect of your weight would you like to talk about?
- On a scale from 1 to 10, how interested are you in taking control of your weight?
- What is hard about managing your weight?

Kushner RF. *Assessment and management of adult obesity*. In: Roadmaps for Clinical Practice series. American Medical Association website. www.ama-assn.org

A TOOL TO SHARE WITH YOUR OVERWEIGHT PATIENTS.

American Cancer Society Guidelines on Nutrition and Physical Activity for Cancer Prevention



Achieve and maintain a healthy weight throughout life.

- Be as lean as possible throughout life without being underweight.
- Avoid excessive weight gain at all ages. For those who are currently overweight or obese, losing even a small amount of weight has health benefits and is a good place to start.
- Engage in regular physical activity and limit consumption of high-calorie foods and beverages as key strategies for maintaining a healthy weight.

 Sierra Nevada
Cancer Center
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Adopt a physically active lifestyle.

- Adults should engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity each week, or an equivalent combination, preferably spread throughout the week.
- Children and adolescents should engage in at least 1 hour of moderate- or vigorous-intensity physical activity each day, with vigorous-intensity activity at least 3 days each week.
- Limit sedentary behavior such as sitting, lying down and watching television and other forms of screen-based entertainment.
- Doing any intentional physical activity above usual activities, no matter what one's level of activity, can have many health benefits.



Consume a healthy diet, with an emphasis on plant sources.

- Choose foods and beverages in amounts that help achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Limit consumption of processed meat and red meats.
- Eat at least 2½ cups of vegetables and fruits each day.
- Choose whole grains in preference to processed (refined) grains. If you drink alcoholic beverages, limit consumption.
- Drink no more than 1 drink per day for women or 2 per day for men.